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2 **ABSTRACT**

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4 Disclosed is a highly integrated and flexible system for vending products and  
5 services to consumers. The system receives information in advance of the vend by  
6 having the consumer insert an identification (ID) card, preferably a driver's license, into a  
7 point-of-purchase terminal (referred to as an OSU device). The OSU device preferably  
8 contains an Optical Scanning Unit (OSU), capable of scanning the textual information on  
9 the ID card. In one embodiment, the scanned information is compared against optical  
10 templates present in the system to discern or verify the information on the ID card, and is  
11 then used by the system to enable or disable the vending transaction, and/or to allow  
12 access to several preregistered system accounts.  
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